

A
SERMON,

Preached *Sept. 28. 1692.* at a

Primary Visitation

Held at

CHICHESTER

BY THE

Right Reverend Father in God

ROBERT

Lord Bishop of CHICHESTER.

Published at the Bishop's Request.

By EDW. PELLING, D.D.

Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties,
And Rector of *Petworth* in *Suffex*.

LONDON, Printed for *Will. Croke*, at the
Green-Dragon without *Temple-Bar*, 1693.

SE R M O N

Preached at the Anniversary of the

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Imprimatur,

*Gmil. Lancaster, R.P.D.
Hen. Ep. Lond. a Sa-
cris Domest.*

Octob. 29.
1691.

Published at the Bishop's Request.

BY EDW. BELLING D.D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties
And Rector of St. Dunstons in the East.

At WOODS Printed for Wm. Wood at the
Green-Langley without Temple-Bar, 1693.

The Epistle Dedicatory
**To the Right Reverend the
Lord Bishop of Chichester.**

My Lord,

COnsidering the long Happiness I have
had at London, one While in
your Neighbourhood, always in your
Friendship, your Lordship will easily believe
it is no little Comfort to me, that in this part
of the Kingdom my Old Acquaintance is at
last my Diocesan, and once again my Neigh-
bour.

Your Lordship knows, that (were there
nothing else to be considered) my Affections to
you are a sufficient Security for my Obedience
to your Commands: And for that Reason, I
presume, it was, that your Lordship hath
been pleased to command me, first to preach
your Visitation-Sermon, and now to publish it.
The Veneration I have for your Character
and Person, makes me ready to observe your
Pleasure in all Particulars; though I must
confess, that in Publishing this mean Dis-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

course, I comply with your Lordships Will with some Regret, because there are many Censorious and Ill-temper'd People in the World, who are ready to interpret that as an Accusation, which is only Advice; and to catch at any thing which may serve them as an Handle to strike at Clergy-men, though the thing be innocent in it self, and be intended to quite different Purposes. It is some Satisfaction to me, that your Lordship is obliged, in some measure, to justify me; and that the Faults which shall be discover'd in these Papers, you have now made your own, by countenancing of them, and making them appear by your own Directions. What Fortune soever this Discourse shall find abroad, I hope you your self will be pleas'd to accept it this second Time, as some (though a small) Testimony, that I am

Your Lordships,

In all Duty and Affection,

Edw. Pelling.

I Tim. 4. 16.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy Doctrine.

NOT to dispute about the Time, when; or about the Place, whence, this Epistle was sent by *St. Paul*; we may observe Three Things of the Person to whom it was directed.

1. That he was intrusted with the Ministerial Office by the special Designation of the Holy Ghost himf. lf. *St. Paul* speaks of Prophecies which went before of him, *1 Tim. 1. 18.* meaning by Prophecies, Divine Revelation, whereby *Timothy* was set apart for the work of the Ministry; ἀπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου, saith *St. Chrysostom*; *Chrysost. in 1 Tim. 1. 18* by the particular Call, and immediate Appointment of the Holy Ghost. For, the conducting of Souls being so great a Work, and the Ministerial Office so great a Dignity, God was pleased in those Times to give special Directions by Divine Revelation, who should have that weighty Trust committed unto them. So *St. Luke* tells us, *Acts 13. 2.* that the Holy Ghost said, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the Work*

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where-

Clem. Ep.
ad Cor. p.
54.

pag. 53.

Euseb. Hist.
Ec. Lib. 3.
cap. 23.

whereunto I have called them. And *Clemens Romanus* tells us expressly, That the Apostles constituted Bishops and Deacons by the Spirit's Approbation; and having perfect Fore-knowledge (by Revelation) *μεταξὺ ὁρισμένην δέδωκεν* (for so I conceive the place should be read) they assigned to such as were Ordained, their respective Cures and Charges Pastoral. And *Clemens Alexandrinus* relates of St. *John* in particular, That as he visited the Churches in *Asia*, he made Clergymen of those who were signified to him by the Holy Ghost. A power of *Discerning Spirits*, or of knowing Mens Hearts, was a special Gift in the beginning of Christianity; and then, for the most part, Men were admitted into Holy Orders by God's special Appointment; which is meant by the word, Prophecy; and so was *Timothy* chosen and set apart.

2. And yet, *Secondly*, it is observable, that at that time *Timothy* was but a young man: Not one of the *νεόφυτοι*, a Novice lately converted to the Faith (for he had been some considerable time an Assistant to St. *Paul*, and a Companion in his Travels) but a Young Man in respect of his Age, and in comparison of other Governors of the Church, who were generally Venerable, not only for their Holy Lives, but for their Hoary Heads also; and so were sometimes promiscuously

miscuously called, *ποσειβύμενοι*, Elders; not because the same Authority, but because the like Gravity was common to them all. For this reason St. Paul, who express a particular Care and Tenderneſs for this his Son *Timothy*, was in a ſpecial manner concern'd, that no Man might deſpiſe his Youth.

3. As young as *Timothy* was, he was plac'd at *Ephesus*, as in his Episcopall See. *Eusebius* gives it us as a receiv'd Tradition, That he was the first Biſhop of that City; the Fathers at the Council of *Chalcedon* reckon ſo too; and indeed the two Epistles of St. Paul to him, wherein he was directed to govern the Church, to order Church-matters, to Ordain Elders, and even to Judge and Censure them, do very plainly import, that he was inveſted with the Episcopall Authority; though it was *κατεσκευασμένη τοῖς* (to uſe the Expreſſion of *Ignatius* the Martyr concerning *Damia*, who was a Young Man, and a Biſhop too) the Ordination of a Young Man, Ordination granted before the uſual time, by reaſon of his ſingular Merits.

This, by the way, ſhews, that in the very beginning of Chriſtianity, the Episcopall Power and Office was a diſtinct thing from that of Preſbyters, and Superiour to it. For if that were true, which ſome would make us believe, that

an equality of Power did originally belong to all Ministers of the Gospel; and that in the first Ages, the Senior Presbyter was wont of course to succeed in the Precedency over the rest, and was called Bishop by the Courtesie of the College, though he was no more in Power than like the Chairman of an Assembly; I say, if it had been anciently and originally thus, it is not likely that so young a Man as *Timothy* would have been dignified with the Preheminence before his turn.

But not to digress. These things, my Reverend Brethren, I have briefly observ'd, that all may see what great Reason *St. Paul* had to direct *Timothy*, how he should behave himself in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the *Pillar and Ground* of Truth, to uphold and Support it, and to exhibit it to the World.

He, who was called to the weighty Office of Saving Souls, by the particular directions of the Holy Ghost: He, who was made one of the Angels of the Church, and had a considerable part of the *Roman Empire* for his Diocess: He, who was to expect so much Contempt and Opposition on all hands, and in his Youth was to encounter with the most formidable Wolves: He, who was to endure so many Difficulties,
and

and was to venture all in the most dangerous Times, and in the most Idolatrous and Corrupt Place: He, who was to light many Families of the Earth to Heaven, and was accountable for his own Soul, and for many thousand Souls besides: He, who had no Comfort to depend upon, but the Testimony of a good Conscience to bear him up in that His day, and in the day of God: He had the highest reason, to look very carefully to his Steps; to make it his only Study, how to Preach well, and to Live better; and to endeavour by all possible means of wholesome Instructions, and an holy Example, to answer the Ends of his high Calling; lest, when he had Preach'd to others, he himself should become a Cast-a-way.

St. *Paul* therefore being uncertain when he should see this young Labourer again, whom he had put lately into the Vineyard, sent him, by Letter, divers necessary Instructions for the due Performance of his great Work: That he should keep Faith, and a good Conscience; that he should settle the publick Service of God; who was to bless his Labours; that he should ordain a Blameless Ministry, to assist him in his heavy Employment; that he should provide against Seducing Spirits; that he should be an Example to Believers; that he should give Attendance to Reading,

Reading, and not neglect the Gift which had been given him by Prophecy; and divers such like Directions more: All which seem to be summed up briefly in these few Words, *Take heed unto thy self, and unto thy Doctrine.*

Which Admonition doth, indeed, principally concern such Church-men as *Timothy* was; such as move in the highest Sphere, such as cast the most powerful, and the most spreading Influence: But yet we who are of a subordinate Rank, should look upon it, as belonging, in a great measure, unto us also. For, though we must not usurp that Authority and Honour which is the Right and Propriety of our Fathers, yet are we strictly bound to take our share of that Duty and Burthen which is common unto us all. And that this Admonition may be of the better use to us, for God's sake, let us, with all possible Care and Diligence, observe both these Caveats in it. 1. Let us take heed unto our selves, as that which chiefly concerns our own Souls: Let us see that our own Lives be such as do become Ministers of God, and Preachers of Righteousness. 2. And then, Let us take heed unto our Doctrine too, as that which concerns the Souls of our Hearers: Let us see that it be such as may have a good Influence upon them, and may serve effectually to build them up too in the most holy

holy Faith. These are the Parts of the Text, and of our Duty ; and if we do persevere in a due Care of these two Things, if we exercise our selves in them with Zeal, and employ our Time upon them with Diligence, we may hope, notwithstanding all Discouragements, that, by the Grace and Blessing of God, we shall save our selves, and them that hear us.

First, Let us take heed unto our selves ; For we tread as if we were walking upon the very Ridge of a Church, where every Step we take is both visible and dangerous ; there is a Precipice on each Hand, and there are Eyes all round about us, and some too that may long to see us fall. In this Case we cannot be too cautious ; and our only sure Way is, *to let our Light shine so before Men, that they may see our good Works ;* to be Examples to them, whether they will or no, to do our Part however ; and by our Prudence, Piety, and signal Vertue, to cut off all Occasion from such as seek Occasion against us. There is not a more odious, a more hurtful Creature in the World, than an Unconscionable and Scandalous Clergy-man : One that holds a Taper behind him, to light all Men but himself : One that over-looks that Hell, which he pretends to shew others : One, whom neither the Sense of God's Honour, nor the Dignity of his Sacred Function,

nor

nor the Interest of Religion, nor the Dictates of Natural and Enlightned Conscience, nor the Preciousness of Souls, nor the Shamefulness of Sin, nor the Terrors of a Judgment-day, can be sufficient to bring to a serious Consideration of his Duty. Nor is any thing a greater Discredit to Religion, than that such an unhallowed Mouth should blow the Trumpet in the Sanctuary; or that such Salt should be used about the Sacrifices of the Temple, as is more noisom and unfavoury, than what is taken out of a Dunghill. It is impossible to express such a Man's Guilt, or the Injuries and Mischief which comes to Religion by it. One such Clergy-man doth the Church more harm, than perhaps Twenty others may be able to do it good, by all their Cares, Pains, and Watchfulness.

I would not have any uncharitable Man hope, that my Design is to cast a Stone at any Reverend Person here. No, my Brethren; my purpose is, but to take the modest Freedom of a friendly Remembrancer; to represent that to you, which is in your own Religious Thoughts; to speak your own Sense, or something near, though it be below it; and to lay before you some of those Considerations, which I am obliged to believe, you your selves are careful to act upon.

Let

Let us then take heed unto our selves, I be-
 seech you :

1. For the Honour of our Profession. I need
 not tell you how full the Ancient Christians were,
 and even profuse in their Encomiums of the
 Priesthood, and how high they set it ; some of
 them comparing the Sacerdotal with the ve-
 ry Regal Dignity. It was venerable in those
 Times of Piety, and Christian Simplicity : And
 though some went too far in their Notions and
 Expressions concerning this Matter, yet so far
 we should, all of us, magnifie our Office (in this
 Sense) as to count it no small thing, that the
 God of *Israel* hath separated us from the Con-
 gregation of *Israel*, to bring us near to himself,
 to do the Service of the Tabernacle of the Lord ;
 as *Moses* told those Sons of *Levi*, *Exod.* 16. Of
 the whole Mass of Mankind, none are segregated
 to be so near unto God, as the Dispensers of his
 Word and Sacraments ; and therefore they are
 called, by way of peculiar Approbation, the
 Servants, the Ministers, the Stewards, the Am-
 bassadors of God. The Washings and Unctions
 under the Law, and the Imposition of Hands
 under the Gospel, were so many Rites of Con-
 secrating and Separating Men to the special Ser-
 vice of God ; and this State of Separation we
 call *Relative Sanctity*, whereby Ministers of
 Holy

Holy Things become, after a more peculiar and eminent manner, *Holy unto the Lord.* And should we, after all this, defile our selves with the Pollutions of the World, or have any Fellowship with the Works of the Flesh, and the Works of Darknes; what should we do, but defecrate the thing which was solemnly hallowed, and bring our Souls under the intolerable Guilt of Profanation and Sacrilege? Consider, I beseech you: Such as ought to be the Use of Consecrated Things, such ought to be the Conversation of Consecrated Persons; as the one is to be sacred, so the other is to be holy. We condemn those who did formerly set up Heathen Idols in Christian Churches, as *Julian* the Apostate did: We abhor those who did put the Blood of Toads into the holy Chalice, and such other abominable Mixtures; as *Epiphanius* says the *Gnosticks* did: We derest the Memory of those, who, in Times of Persecution, deliver'd up the *Holy Bible* to be burnt, as the *Traditores* did; and threw the Holy Sacrament to Dogs; as *Optatus* says the old *Donatists* did: And what should we think of our selves, if, after the solemn Dedication of our Souls and Bodies to God's Use, and to the Ministration of Holy Things, we should prostitute our own sacred Character, and abandon our selves to the common

mon Lusts and Impurities of the World? If any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the Temple of God is holy, saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. 3. 17. This Temple we of the Clergy are, after a peculiar manner; and something more: And what shall not we deserve, if we should defile our selves, where Temple, and Priest, and Altar, and Sacrifice should meet in One? Besides, we see with Sorrow how low our Profession is sunk in the Esteem of some People; nor is there any Way to redeem the Honour of it so effectually, as by that Gravity, and Exemplary Vertue, which are the proper and certain Means of adorning it. You know the Story in Josephus, of Alexander the Great marching to Jerusalem, when he saw the Priests meeting him in their Robes, and Jaddus the High Priest in his Pontifical Habit, and with a Golden Frontlet on his Mitre, wherein the Name of God was written, the King, though enrag'd at Jaddus, was so tamed by Natural Conscience, and by the Natural Sense he had of Religion, that he presently did Obeysance to God's Name, and shew'd Reverence to the High Priest for God's sake. Jaddus took great heed to himself at that time: And truly, my Brethren, we cannot take a better Course to soften the Spirits of some wild and troublesome Men in the World, than by letting

Joseph. Antiquit. lib. 11. cap. 8.

them see what we have of God upon us; and by shewing them, not the bare Name, but the Perfections of God, those charming Vertues which resemble the Perfections and Glories of the Divine Nature, and which are the true and lively Characters of the Divine Nature. This (if any thing) must needs command Reverence from Men of Sense; I dare say, will command it from all, who have a Sense of Common, Moral Vertue, though they have very little of Revealed Religion.

2. Let us, I beseech you, take heed to our selves, not only to adorn our Profession, but that we may be useful and beneficial *in it*. Though our great Business be like our blessed Saviour's, to go about *doing Good*, especially to those unto whom we are sent; yet many times, and in many places, it is a very hard matter to do it, though we use our utmost Endeavours; because it is no easie matter to persuade Men, especially to their Spiritual Good; a thing which doth not fall under the Invitation of their Senses, as their Worldly Interest doth. Though we *toil all the Night* (as he said, who was afterwards made a Fisher of Men) yet many times *we take nothing*, unless it be Weeds, which, comparatively, is as good as nothing. But I consider what the Lord said to his Disci-
ples

plis at Sea, *Joh. 21, 6, Cast the Net on the Right
 Side of the Ship, and ye shall find; and then they
 were not able to draw it for the multitude of Fishes.*
 This is often our Case; we take nothing, when,
 for want of Advertency, we cast not on the
 Right Side: But when we do that, our La-
 bours are successful. But if a Man be unskil-
 ful, or utterly unmindful of his Business; cares
 not what he is, nor what he does; how can he
 hope to speed, on which Side soever he casteth
 his Net? How can he expect that God will hear
 his Prayers, or bless his Pains, or in any measure
 prosper the Work which he doth not duly re-
 gard himself? The nature of the thing will not
 allow him to expect it, because People are more
 apt to be influenced by Example, than by In-
 struction; the one is more obvious, and sinks
 deeper than the other: And a good Sermon is
 lost, and flung back upon a Man's Face, when
 his Life is irreligious. But if our People see us
 our selves express the Power of Godliness, they
 will be the more apt to count it a serious thing,
 and the more capable of receiving holy Impres-
 sions from us. If they see us diligently attend-
 ing the Worship of God, grave, zealous, and
 devout at Prayer, they will be the more readily
 allur'd to lift up their own Hearts, and to set
 their Affections on Things above. If they see
 in

in us that Humility, that Meekness, that Patience, that Charity, that Peaceableness of Mind, and those other Vertues and Graces which we would form in their Hearts, and which are so amiable in the sight of God and Man; if, I say, they behold the Beauty of them in us, they will be the more easily solicited to the Love and Practice of them. In short; By God's Blessing, our good Examples will not be lost, though our Exhortations may, what Discouragements soever we may meet with in our great Undertaking; how deaf or distemper'd soever the People may be, with whom we have to deal; and how little soever our Hopes may be for the present, the Innocence and Strictness of our Lives will, by God's Grace, one time or other, effectually work upon them: To be sure, we shall have this great Comfort upon our Death-beds, that we have acted as became Conscientious and honest Pastors; when their Comfort will be very little, to consider, that we have let them without Excuse. Whatever their Condemnation may be, for Christ his sake, let us take heed that we be not guilty of that which the great Exemplar of Holiness laid to the Charge of the Scribes and Pharisees, *Matth. 23. They bind heavy Burthens, and grievous to be born, and lay them on other Mens Shoulders; but they them-*

themselves will not move them with one of their
Fingers.

13. These Considerations, my Brethren, affect
the Conscience, and we know our selves ob-
liged in point of Conscience, to take heed unto
our selves upon these Accounts. Give me leave
to add in the next place, that we must take heed
to our selves in point of Prudence too. Vulgar
People are not wont to consider the Consequen-
ces of things, but we should; we should look
forward in all Cases, and evermore consider
what will follow if we be careless of our selves,
and unmindful of our Duty: We should lay
every thing to our Hearts before-hand. And
what else, I beseech you, will be the Conse-
quence, but this; that we shall scandalize our
Friends, gratifie our Enemies, bring upon one
another a common Reproach, and in the End
expose our whole Church to God's Judg-
ments?

14. God be blessed, notwithstanding Faction and
Vice, there are great Numbers of good People,
who love the Ways of this our *Sion*; especially
where the Feet of those who preach Salvation
unto it, are beautiful. When they see (as it
was said of *Origen*) an admirable Harmony be-
tween the Doctrine and Life of a Clergy-man;
when he is ἐν τῷ προκειμένῳ, νόμῳ, ἐμφυκῶ, καὶ τῷ
ἄρῳ.

ὁπότε ἡ ἐκκλησία, as St. Chrysostom speaks, a Representation and Picture of good Living, and an animated Pandect of the Laws of Religion; then is the Church's Face amiable indeed, in the Eyes of all her Friends; and then every good Man, though he be illiterate, hath the same Argument to offer for our Church, that was anciently used in defence of Christianity, viz. the good Lives of the Professors and Preachers of it. And this is sometimes a more ready way to convince and confirm People, than Dint of Disputation. But when they who should be Patterns, blot their own Copy, how can we hope to see a good Transcript? In such a Case we should discourage even those that love us; we should make them ashamed of those Affections which they see so ill placed, and of that Confidence which they repose in Men, so contradictory to themselves: And perhaps too we may occasion some secret Jealousie in our best Friends, that we our selves are not persuaded of the Terrors of the Lord, when we express so little Apprehension and Fear of them.

Nor is this all: For any Man may see how many there are in the World that look upon us with an insidious Eye, and watch for our Halting. So that between Irreligion, and Superstition, and Hypocrisie, we are still in danger.

And

And what an acceptable thing would it not be to such, to discover any Flaws in the Lives of a Clergy, whose very Vertues they hate? And if we would stand only upon our own just Defence, nothing can be a greater Satisfaction or Security to us, *to take heed unto our selves*; this being a certain Way for us to keep a Conscience void of Offence both to God and Man, and even towards our Enemies. And 'tis no inconsiderable part of Christian Prudence, to cut off all just Occasion of Quarrel, especially where Men seek it; and to minister no Grounds of Scandal in an uncharitable Age, when Scandals are apt to be taken, whether they be given, or no. What manner of Men ought we to be, when even our Righteousness, and our good Works are an Eye-sore? When Men will not be so just as to pardon (at least) our Vertues, we cannot expect they will be so merciful as to forgive us our Vices. Let us therefore behave our selves with such Caution, that if Men will malign us, they may hate us for no other Cause, but for that we are Ministers of True Religion; and then we need not be ashamed, or discouraged, because it was upon that sole Account that the World hated our very Lord and Master before us.

To this, let me add, that we should take heed to our selves in defence of our Common Fame;

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for that always suffers by the Miscarriages of a few (sometimes by the Faults of some one) whose Immoralities some will be sure to lay open, that they may defame all the rest, whose Virtues and Merits they will as surely conceal. You know how, in the early Times of Christianity, the Impieties of the *Simbrians* redounded to the prejudice of the whole Christian Cause; those Wickednesses which they acted being, by the Heathens, laid to the Charge of the whole Church, though (as *Justin Martyr*, in his Apology, tells us) they had nothing common with them, but only the general Name of Christians. And so it is with us at this Day: Let one of our Members suffer in his Reputation, and (though it be unjust that, in this Sense, the whole Body should suffer with him, yet) 'tis usual for the Reflexion and Scandal to pass upon all, without Discrimination; the Guilty and Innocent are slain together: And so it comes to pass, that both the Injury which every particular Clergy-man sustains by it is of great Concernment, and the Damage which the Publick sustains too is irreparable.

But matter of Scandal is not the greatest thing to be considered, though that be too great: There is something of a higher nature yet. Since *Ephraim* is against *Manasseh*, and

Manasseh

Messiah against *Abraham*, and both against *Judas*, we ought to take very great heed, lest by our Sins and Neglects God be provoked to be against us all. We have no reason to be confident that God will keep that Candlestick safe and fast in his Hand, whose Tapers yield not their due Light: And it is observable, that when those Messages, in *Apoc. 2. & 3.* so full of Admonitions and Threats, were sent to the Seven Churches of *Asia*, they were directed specially to the several Angels (or Bishops) of those Churches (and, in all probability, *Timothy* was then one of them.) Which intimates to us, that it lieth very much in the Ministry of any Church, either to prevent, or to further and help on those dismal Calamities, which are many times the Issue of Carelessness and Irreligion. Therefore, my Brethren, for God's Honour sake, whose Authority and Character we have; for our Fellow-Christians sake, whom Charity obligeth us to regard, as Signets upon our Right Hand; for the Faith sake, which was once, for all, delivered unto the Saints; for the Kingdom's sake, in the Prosperity and Peace whereof every particular Man's Interest is bound up; for the Churches Sake, which is the Mother of us all, and whom we are bound to Obey, Honour, and, if need requires, to be Victims for: Upon all these accounts, let

us, the Clergy of this Church, give all possible diligence, that we may be blameless and unreprouable; that we be Exemplars of Vertue and Holiness to those, whom God hath set us over; that we watch for their Souls, and that we may Execute our Office, and give an account at last with Joy.

And before I shut up this point, I beg leave to recommend briefly to our common Christian Care, these few particulars.

1. That we often peruse and consider seriously, those Solemn Promises and Vows which we made at our Ordination; and look upon them as such Sacred Tyes, as are not to be answer'd, but by our faithful Performances, and by our utmost Cares and Labours to the last gasp.

2. That we our selves be careful to walk, all of us, by the same Rule, and to mind the same thing, and to be knit together, like Brethren, in an inviolable bond of Love and Friendship to one another; and all of us, to be inseparably united in due Affection and Obedience, to our Learned and Conscientious Diocesan.

3. That we feed the Flock of God, not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind, out of an Honest Heart, and a pure Conscience; and that we make our Charges thoroughly sensible (if we can) that we Act upon Principles of Conscience

and

and out of sincere Love and Charity to them;
 and because the Love of our common Saviour
 constrains us. St. *Chrysostom* hath well observed,
 that when our Lord ask'd *Peter*, *whether he* mel. repus.
lib. 2.
Loved him, and commanded him to Feed his
 Sheep; it was not, that he might find out *Peter's*
 Affections to himself (for he knew his Heart)
 but that he might shew his own Affections and
 Love to his Church; and that he might Teach
 all Ministers of the Gospel, to express the same
 Affections to his Church, by his own blessed
 Example.

4. That in the discharge of our Ministerial
 Office, for Love sake, we apply our care and
 pains, as it is most suitable to particular Mens
 Necessities: Instructing the Ignorant, assisting
 the Infirm, visiting the Sick, comforting the
 Afflicted, admonishing Evil Doers; in Meekness
 instructing those that oppose us, compassionate
 to the Needy, Patient and Merciful to Enemies,
 Candid towards the Imprudent, Just, Kind,
 Friendly, Gentle, Charitable, and Tenderly
 Affected towards all.

5. That God may prosper the great Work in
 our Hands; it is to be wisht, that we would
 daily open the Doors of our Churches, and in-
 vite our Parishioners to meet us there constantly,
 for the Solemn Celebration of God's Service.

There

There remain part of our Business lies, to Catechise Youth, to Administer the Sacraments of Christ's Body and Blood, and with one Mouth, and one Heart, to invoke the Goodness of God for a Blessing upon us all. And the oftner these things are done, the more shall we and our Charges be fixt in a course of Virtue and Piety; and the more will their Hearts be knit to us, as well as our Hearts to them.

6. To which let me, I beseech you, add, without Offence, that we use the Prayers of the Church, with that Reverence, Decorum, and Zeal, which is suitable to so solemn a Service. The Arguments against our Common Prayers are trifling, and will appear so every day more and more, if we our selves do but recommend them to others, by our own Devotion. 'Tis the slubbering of them over, after a hasty, cold, and uncouth manner; and sometimes, with an affected and ungraceful Tone (Voice I cannot so well call it) 'tis this that has made our Service-Book contemptible among some People, who consider not the Excellent Contexture, and the True Christian Spirit which is in the Prayers themselves. And we shall be the more to blame, if we take not heed to remove this Objection, because it is an Objection out of our own Mouths. Briefly then, we should be careful to Read the
Publick

Publick Prayers with that Gravity and Concern'd-
ness, with that Thoughtfulness and Deliberation,
with that Attention and Presence of Mind, and
with that Fervency of Spirit, as if we were to
give up the Ghost the next hour: And were all
of us but Zealously intent upon this, I dare say
there would be no need of further Arguments
or Oratory, to bespeak the Affections of People
to our Service, or to render it Venerable.

Secondly, I beg the excuse of this Reverend
Assembly, that I have been so particular and
prolix upon the former part of my Text, of
taking heed to our selves; because it is indeed the
Principal thing; that which is a most necessary
ingredient to make our Doctrine operative and
effectual; and considering, that what hath
been said already, has taken up more time than
I thought it would have cost us, I must dispatch
this next thing with a quick Hand; *Take heed un-
to thy Doctrine.*

I must not take the Confidence here, to direct
this Learned Body; and yet there are some
things to be borrowed of *St. Paul*, which may
be of very great use to us all, though Ministered
by the unworthiest Hand.

1. First, That our Doctrine be such, as Na-
turally tendeth to promote a Good Life; Do-
ctrine, which is according to Godliness, *1 Tim 6:3.*

ὡς αἰνέσαι διδασκαλίαν, 1 Tim. I. 10. wholesome, Sana-
 tory Doctrine; such Truths as are Restoratives
 and Preservatives of Substantial Religion. Un-
 necessary Disputes, lofty Speculations, fine, airy
 Descants, and the like; though there may be
 Truth in them, and profitable Truth too in its
 kind, yet they are quite out of our way, whose
 Business is to Teach People to hold the Faith in
 a pure Conscience. Our Discourses therefore,
 are to be in some measure or other Practical;
 and the more Practical our Matter is, the plainer
 our Method, the easier our Style, the clearer
 our Expressions, the more obvious our Argu-
 ments, and the more solid and instructive our
 Notions are, the better shall we do the parts of
 Conscientious and Skilful Preachers, and the
 more Profitable will our Discourses be; witness,
 for all, that one Excellent Book, the *Whole Duty
 of Man*; the Book that hath done such Univer-
 sal Good in the World; and that not only by
 the Gravity of the Matter, but by the usefulness
 of the Style; the Contexture of that Book, be-
 ing ordered by the most Pious and Judicious
 Author so, that the whole is Practical, Plain,
 Inviting, Adapted to every Man's Reason, easy
 to be understood by People of all Capacities.

2. *Let us take heed*, Secondly, that our Do-
 ctrine be the True and Genuine Doctrine of the
 Gospel;

Gospel, Unconstru'd, sound Speech, that cannot be Condemn'd, as *S. Paul* directed *Titus, Tit. 2. 8.* Many Errors are abroad in the World, which have Tainted the Truths of the Gospel, with a mixture of Humane Traditions, and Private Fancies. To keep our selves and our Flocks from infection, these two things, in short, are very advisable.

1. First, that in all Points we diligently consult, and have an eye upon the Faith of the most Primitive Ages. There is a concise way (saith *St. Cyprian*) for Religious and simple-minded Men to remove an Error, and to find out and discover the Truth. And what way is that? Why, by going to the Spring, to the Head and Original of Divine Tradition. As, if you would find where the fault lyes, when the Water fails, the readiest course, is to repair to the Fountain, to see whether the fault be there, or in the Aquæduct; so when Truth fails, or becomes uncertain, the surest way, is to go to its Original, to the Gospel of Christ, and to Apostolical Tradition. And certainly, the better Judgment we shall be able to make in all material points, the nearer we go to the Fountain-Head, and the more narrowly we observe, what condition things were in Anciently, in those Channels which were next to the Fountain. Had this

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this

this course been well and carefully followed, abundance of unhappy Controversies might have been prevented; which in these latter times have made such vast disturbances in the Church.

2. Next to the Doctrines of the Old Catholick Church, let us, for God's sake, take great heed to the Doctrine of our own Church in particular, which hath with the greatest care followed the Ancient pattern. I mention this the rather, because some have presumed to represent us to the unthinking part of the World, as Friends to some Foreign Doctrines; Doctrines brought hither, some from *Rome*, others from *Irenopolis*. An Accusation full of Uncharitableness; and I am confident, of Falshood; it being impossible for those, who are profest Members of the Church of *England*, and have often Subscribed to her Articles and whole Constitution; to entertain or favour such pernicious Errors, without such horrible Hypocrisie, as no Man of Candor and Justice will suppose, so many Guides of Souls can be guilty of. But sometimes there is no fence against Calumny; and we must content our selves with the Answer of a Good Conscience in such a case. Nevertheless, my Brethren, 'tis Prudential and Necessary for us, to keep at a great distance from every Opinion, which in the Eyes of discerning and good Men

look

looks like Hereticals; and not to come within the reach of Suspicion; for it is not enough for us to be Innocent, unless we appear so.

To conclude; let us take heed, that our Doctrine be the True Word of God; that it be agreeable to the Sense of the Ancient Church, where the Holy Scripture is not plain; that it be a means to form in Peoples Hearts, those Virtues, wherein the Life and Substance of Religion doth consist, things which are Honest, Just, Pure, Lovely, and of good Report; that it aim at those Virtues chiefly, which are productive of many more; as, a Devout Temper, Humility, Charity, Sobriety, and a peaceable Disposition; that it help to promote the Practice of those Duties, wherein our Charges are most negligent and most wanting: That it tend to the Publick Good of the Church and State, to which we all belong; that it Teach People to be orderly, quiet, and obedient in all things lawful; that it be not mixt with any mean Designs of our own, but that God's Glory, and the good of Souls, be the end of Preaching, doing the work of God, as Faithful Servants of God, and as in the sight of God; that our Doctrine be deliver'd with Gravity and Zeal, with Meekness of Spirit, with Simplicity of Mind, with Application to those Sins which are most reigning

and infectious, with that impartiality of
Honesty, which becomes Men who are Sur-
wards of God's Mysteries.

And as long as we addict our selves to Min-
ister before God after this manner, we shall have
all the Reason to hope, that he will bless our
Ministrations. Nor should we be discouraged
if we presently find not the Success we desire.
For Grace and Virtue grows, like the pious
Husbandman's Seed, by degrees, by little and
little, first the Blade, then the Ear, at last the
full Corn, and a good Crop. The Religion of
our Lord Jesus is, in some points, so much above
the Carnal Reason of Unregenerate Men, in
others, so contrary to their Corrupt Inclination,
that it requires Time and Labour to bring them
to the true Sense, Love and Practice of it.
we be diligent and assiduous; God, whom we
serve, will be Glorified, our Church will rise
in Honour and Interest, our Charges will be
Edified, and by God's Gracious Assistance
shall Save our selves, and them that hear of
Which, that every one of us may do, God
his Mercy grant, for Christ Jesus his sake.

F I N I S.